

What factors determine the quality of collaborative processes?

Joseph P McMahon, P.E., J.D.

Manager, Collaborative Processes®



Why collaborate?

- Failure or inability of traditional organizations to effectively address the problem
- Consider what some of the reasons for this may be from your experience.

Some possible reason for failure

- Conflicting political agenda, or competition among organizations or branches/levels of government.
- Conflict within an organizational stakeholder, or an otherwise dysfunctional entity.
- Concern over upcoming elections.
- Conflict or litigation among the stakeholders leading to impasse.
- Fear on the part of those empowered to act.
- Fragmentation of power and authority, overlapping jurisdictions or cross jurisdiction issues.
- "Decision avoidance."
- No person or organization looking out for the "commons."

What is collaboration?

- **Collaboration has many meanings.** Its Latin roots are *com* and *laborare*, being "working together."
- **Collaboration means - dialogue and integrated action to achieve common objectives.**
- **Collaboration means - to achieve what no single member could do. Collaborative Processes® combine creativity, intellect, resources and shared principles.**



Develop 3-4 cases (actual or semi-hypothetical)

- Think over matters in which you have collaborated (successfully or not) (3 minutes)
Identify those that may have illustrative effect.
- At your table, discuss your cases quickly and then select one such case to work with in this session.

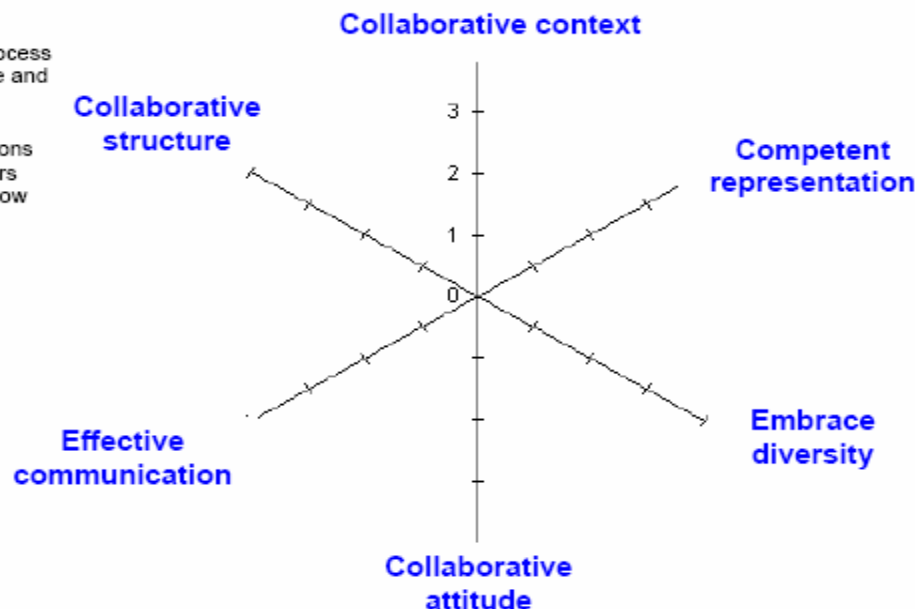
Assessing collaborative processes ver6

(On each of these six factors, how strong is this collaborative process, on a scale of 0 to 4?)



- The interests of all stakeholder have been discussed and are understood
- We are aligned around clearly identified common objectives
- The Issues we face are suitable for collaboration
- We have realistic expectations
- We operate without inappropriate external pressures

- We have a results driven structure and process
- Necessary data for decisions are available and well assessed
- We have sufficient time for the task
- We make rather than avoid needed decisions
- We are aware of, and avoid, decision errors
- We are accountable to each other and follow through on commitments



- We engage in dialogue not debate
- Stakeholders speak to explain, listen to understand
- We recognize and accept that we must learn from each other
- We are open to change and our thinking is revised as needed
- We are candid and disclosure our interests

- Each representative is qualified and has been well selected
- All necessary parties are engaged in this collaboration
- There is adequate organizational support from each stakeholder
- Representatives are well prepared and attend sessions
- We show similar commitment and motivation

- Stakeholders effectively deal with their diversity and power asymmetries
- All stakeholders understand the benefit of diverse views and complimentary strengths
- Stakeholders ensure views of less powerful stakeholders are given a voice

- We demonstrate attitudes of respect and trust, avoiding stereotyping or reactive behavior
- Leadership is shared rather than positional
- We show flexibility and engage in self reflection
- We expect change use adaptive management to respond
- We have a healthy balance among creativity, pragmatism and risk
- There is sufficient transparency, data freely shared and explained
- We put energy both to completing tasks and improving our working relationship
- We share credit and responsibility for the collaboration
- We work to satisfy the interests of all stakeholders
- We are able to combine talents, ideas, resources energy

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Concept sources: *TeamWork*, Larson & LaFasto, 1990; *Collaborative Leadership*, Chrislop & Larson, 1994, www.inter-mediation.org

Collaboration factor: “Competent representation”

What determines the quality of competent representation?

Collaboration factor: “Embrace diversity”

What creates the ability of groups to embrace diversity?

Collaboration factor: “Collaborative attitude”

What is a “collaborative attitude”?

How are collaborative attitudes created?



Collaboration factor: “Effective communication”

What constitutes or contributes to effective communication?

Collaboration factor: “Collaborative structure”

What is an effective collaborative structure?

Collaboration factor: “Collaborative context”

What determines whether a collaborative context is present?

Can the context be varied?

Collaborative leadership



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What distinguishes good collaboration? When Larson and LaFasto (see below) investigated "what factors distinguish good problem solving team" they learned the factors are:

1. Focus: clarity about what they are doing at each moment in their work.
2. Collaborative climate: a climate of fun, comfort, informality, acceptance, competence, value.
3. Communication: openness, problems get discussed rather than avoided or minimized.

Other factors that could be added include:

4. Willingness to experiment and take risk.
5. Taking action rather than avoiding decisions and action.
6. Being inclusive and modeling what collaboration really is.

Concept sources: *When Teams Work Best*, LaFasto and Larson, Sage, 2001; *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, Isaacs, Currency, 1999, *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*, Chrislip, 2002, Jossey-Bass.



"Conflict transformation" asks participants and neutrals to look at conflict from a perspective that includes resolution and management but also includes other key perspectives. The concept of conflict transformation has been developed and pioneered by author and teacher John Paul Lederach.

Conflict transformation asks us to:

- Expect more than resolution of the presenting conflict but also **dialogue about the deeper patterns** of conflict that may be present in the parties' relationships.
- Engage in dialogue with conflicting parties to that **deepens understanding** of the parties, the context they are working in and the systemic issues that may support unproductive conflict.
- Be open to defining and seeking the changes that not only address the current conflict but also **build a joint vision of the future**.
- Integrate our understanding and discussion of varying time frames; not only the immediate present but our **future relationships**.
- **Look at "both the episode and the epicenter."** See Lederach book below.

Sources: The Little Book of Conflict Transformation, J.P. Lederach, Good Books, 2003, ISBN 1-56148-390-7, see <http://www.goodbks.com/titlepage.asp?ISBN=1561483907>



Collaborative processes® draws on the work of *Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*, Chrislip, 2002, and *Collaborative Leadership*, Chrislip and Larson, 1991 and sees the following conditions for successful collaboration:

Motives for collaboration and initiating context

- 1. Good timing and clear need.
- 2. Convening leadership.

Organizing elements of collaboration

- 3. Inclusion: broad based involvement and strong stakeholder groups.
- 4. Constructive process; a safe environment that includes credibility, openness, flexibility, shared learning, capacity building, some interim successes, ability to overcome mistrust and skepticism, and undertake adaptive work.
- 5. Good information for decisions (from within or outside the group).

Critical roles that must be played in collaboration

- 6. Appropriate stakeholders including the commitment or involvement of high level visible leaders and support or acquiescence of established authorities or powers.
- 7. Process expertise to facilitate the group.
- 8. Substance expertise that supports group learning.
- 9. Facilitative leadership from among the group to promote collaboration.

“Collaborative Leadership”

- "People with different experiences, knowledge and perspectives make more creative and better decisions." (1)
- "American culture glorifies the heroic leader who recognizes danger and galvanizes people into quick action and sure-fire results." (16) By definition, heroic leadership cannot enhance the civic community because it denies fundamentally the notion of shared responsibility." (17)

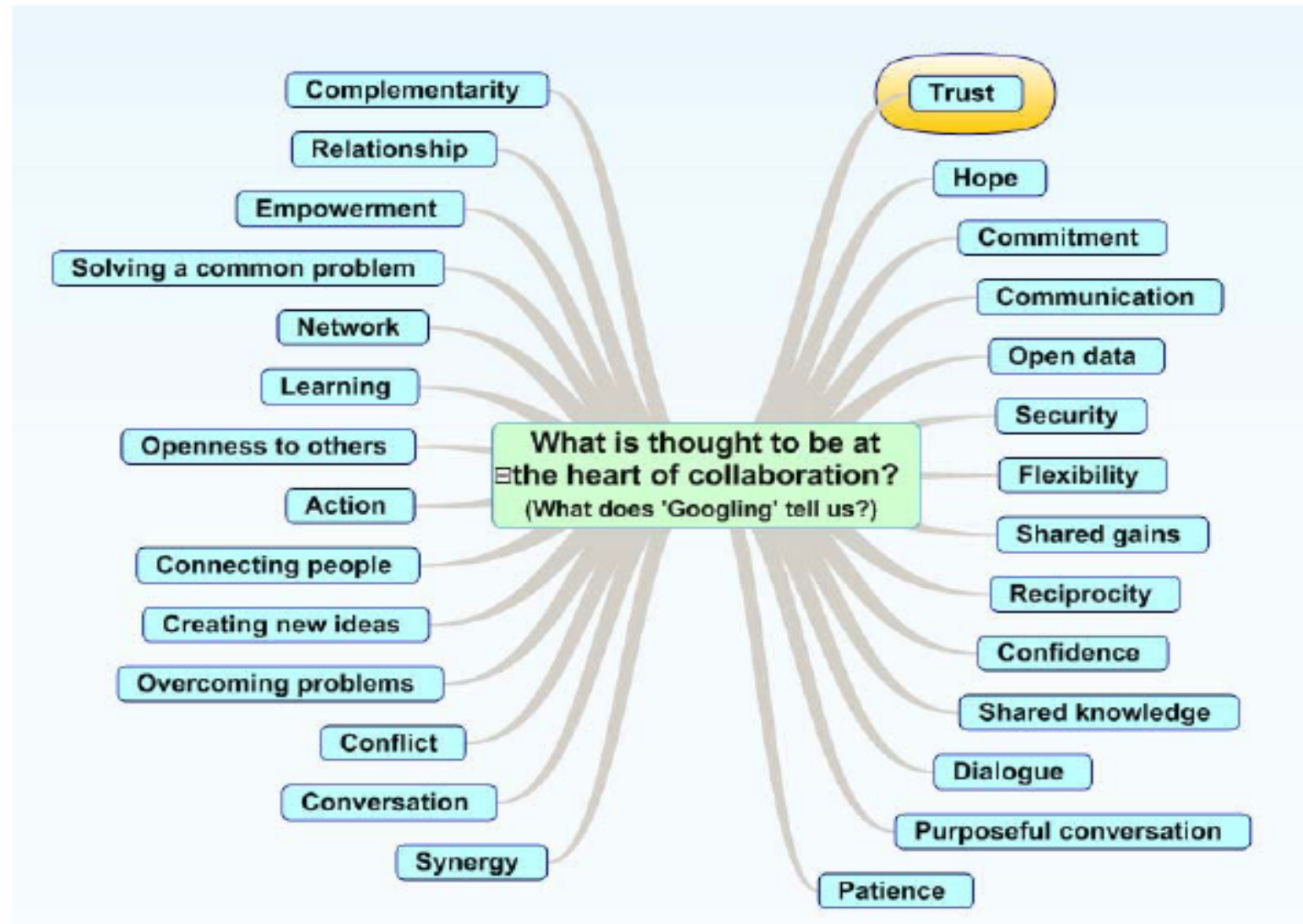
Page references: *Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*, D. Chrislip, 2002 Jossey-Bass

- "Collaboration as an alternate strategy for addressing public concerns grows out of the increasing destructive consequences of current political practices." (44)
- **Bring (1) appropriate people + (2) constructive ways + (3) good information = create authentic visions or address shared concerns.** (50)

Page references: *Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*, D. Chrislip, 2002 Jossey-Bass



It occurred to me that identifying what is at **the heart of collaboration** could be helpful. So I undertook a very unscientific and unscholarly project to see what a Google™ search would reveal. The results of a search in September 2008 are shown below. "Trust" is highlighted as the most common answer.



What are the implications?

- For self?
- For your organization?
- How could things change for the better?